From the Chair

Dear History Alumni,

Greetings from the faculty of the History Department. We hope you and your families are safe and healthy despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. I’m pleased to report the faculty in the department are all well and we have avoided any cases of coronavirus. We’ve faced our share of challenges, to be sure, but your professors and our students have responded with tremendous resilience, artful creativity, and dogged determination to continue the work of the department and the Furman Advantage.

For the third year in a row, I am sad to report that the department will be losing one of our most beloved teachers and colleagues with the retirement of T. Lloyd Benson, who joined the department in 1990. For thirty years, Dr. Benson has been a fount of experienced wisdom, measured advice, and good cheer, all while being one of our most thoughtful and innovative teachers. When I joined the department in 2009, Lloyd served as my departmental mentor, a role he continues to fulfill to my great benefit. I’ll sorely miss walking past his door – our offices are next to each other – and being pulled into a fascinating discussion of whatever was on his mind that day. I also regret to report that Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, who joined us last year to teach Middle Eastern and Islamic history, decided in the spring to take a position at UC-Santa Barbara.

Like most of you, our work in the department underwent some tremendous changes this year. As you’ll read in more detail below, we all shifted to remote learning in the spring and most of the department continued to teach via Zoom this fall. Despite everything, it’s been another productive year for your beloved (cont. on page 12)
Celebrating Dr. Benson!

Lloyd Benson joined the Department of History in 1990. In his thirty-year career he saw tremendous change at Furman and in the profession. He spoke with Erik Ching.

ERIK CHING: What brought you to Furman?
LLOYD BENSON: This was straightforward. Furman had a position and I was on a one year appointment at Berry looking for a position that matched my skill set.

EC: What are some of your best memories at Furman?
LB: There has been nothing like having students who started a class somewhat history-averse but left with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the past and their own roles as historical actors. It was equally exciting to work with students in the early days of the Internet. We started from scratch, asking basic questions such as “How could we use digital tools? How could students become contributors of high quality content and not just passive consumers? How could digital humanities and mapping tools change how we discern patterns of change and help us to discover a more inclusive past?” These seem as relevant now as when the Internet had just a few hundred history-related sites. The digital collections the students and I created have been used by everyone from kids in elementary classes to leading scholars in a variety of disciplines. They bequeathed an enduring legacy. I have great memories of student travel, ranging from summer archival work and field trips with seniors and first year students to places such as Charleston, Antietam, and Gettysburg, to formal travel study with the Charleston summer program and several Slow Food Italy May-X programs.

EC: One of the highlights of your time at Furman was winning the Meritorious Teaching Award in 1998, as well as the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities’ Teacher of the Year award in 2009. Comment?
LB: Someone jumbled up the ballots on both of these and I demand a recount. With so many exceptional teachers at Furman and in the History Department it was moving and humbling to receive these awards. It is a testament to my colleagues and other mentors in our institution that I was given strong support when trying out a variety of teaching approaches.

EC: How did you come to your field of American history/Civil War history/Southern history?
LB: In the early 1960s the folks at American Heritage published an illustrated history of the American Civil War. A copy of this ended up in the East Hill Elementary library where primary school me checked it out over and over. Our teacher, Court Bell, reinforced this by throwing a bunch of us kids into an International Harvester Travelall and toting us to Gettysburg. I was hooked. Even at this age, however, the war posed difficult questions. My mother grew up in Raleigh, N.C. and shared with us a great pride in regional songs, stories, and recipes. But I grew up in a Northern community at a time when the post-MLK Civil Rights Movement was debating the paths forward for equity and justice. Civil War history fit neither of these exactly. I’ve been trying to think through the puzzles, dissonances, and unanswered questions ever since.

EC: How have you seen your field evolve/change, if at all, during your time at Furman?
LB: In the 1980s the field of Civil War history had a reputation for being stuffy and retrograde, offering little more than tired tales of generals and politicians. Indeed, social historians at the time often suggested that a person who fell asleep in 1850 and woke up in 1880 would have noticed very few changes as a consequence of the war. Since then, however, the field has flourished. We have discovered new aspects of spatial, cartographic, and environmental history and the landscape of memory. A productive debate over the war’s impact on the economy, labor relations, and the globalization of commodities markets has also occurred. Scholarship has shown how the war reshaped who people thought they were, how they understood the concept of family, who they thought they belonged to, how they believed and worshipped, and what they thought nation, patriotism, and military service might mean in a specifically American context. It recast law, philosophy, history, agriculture, higher education, and public finance. We have learned much more about how the war era opened new possibilities and new debates about democratization and the meaning of citizenship, even as recent work has contributed new insights into the ways these promises were deferred, appropriated, or sabotaged.

EC: What plans do you have for retirement?

LB: There is now a long list of small things. We’ll do some family travel once it is safe again, not excluding eating more Italian food in Italy. I want to try out some of the new ice skating trails in Canada. I have a few small articles and my Six Cities book project that I want to push forward on. I want to build some nineteenth century style tools to do nineteenth century style woodworking. Although far from being a gardener I want to plant or harvest something new every week of the year. I have a backlog of books to read.

EC: We’re all going to miss having you here in the History Department. What will you miss?

LB: The camaraderie of the coffee pot.

EC: Any parting thoughts or words?

LB: Maybe it would be to ask our alums to call up family or relatives and have them visit some smaller museum or “hidden gem” historical site that has probably taken a hit or two in visitorship in recent years. Or have them tell us what good history book they’ve been reading lately.

Alumni Memories of Lloyd Benson

These are just a few of the comments we received from many alumni who shared their stories about Dr. Benson.

One of my most memorable experiences at Furman was my senior seminar with Dr. Benson. The topic was the battle autumn of 1862, with much of the focus on Antietam. There were only five students in the seminar, which made it very personal and unique. We met for discussions at coffee shops, North Village, and other places. The culmination of our seminar was a trip to Antietam with Dr. Benson. What an amazing experience to travel to a battlefield with an expert! We were also able to squeeze in trips to Harper’s Ferry and Gettysburg. I will never forget following Dr. Benson around Gettysburg, as he described the battle sequence in great detail, truly making history come alive!

Hope (Bentley) Culpepper ’05

Dr. Benson was just starting out at Furman when I was a student. That year coincided with the split between FU and the SCBC. One day Dr. Benson grabbed a copy of the Paladin newspaper from the desk of a student, held it above his head like a trophy and yelled “We have crossed the Rubicon!” If memory serves, this was a quote in the paper from Dr. Johns regarding the final “divorce” from the SCBC.

(cont. on page 7)
I was delighted and very flattered to receive the Alester G. Furman Jr. and Janie Earle Furman Meritorious Teaching Award for 2019-2020. My approach to teaching is fairly traditional: I combine carefully organized lectures with small-group discussions of important readings. I know that some people question the value of the teacher being “the sage on the stage”, but I think that listening to a good lecture is far from a passive experience: taking notes requires paying close attention for long periods, keeping the big picture in mind while dealing with details, and composing speedy summaries that capture the essence of the information being presented – all of these skills are important throughout life.

I tend to take a low-tech approach to teaching. Images of people and places connected to the course are certainly helpful learning aids, but I have found that students sit up and pay attention to the geographical context of history far more closely when I hand-draw maps on the board, instead of displaying a ready-made image. I also like to find foods or objects that can help students to connect with the course material through taste and touch: sipping modern versions of the types of tea that were thrown overboard at the Boston Tea Party, or feeling fabric made from maguey cactus fiber can bring distant worlds to life. In some classes, I’ve had students write carefully researched historical fiction papers, creating stories filled with details about buildings, clothing, customs, and scenery that can help build empathy with the people we study – people who are of different races, ethnicities, social classes, and, of course, time periods from ourselves. I think fondly about the many students over the years whose lively contributions and responses have helped to energize my teaching and make it a deeply rewarding experience.

I was humbled and surprised to receive word this fall that I had been named the William E. Leverette, Jr., Professor of history. It is an excellent reminder of the ongoing quality and rigor of the department. I remember my meetings with then-retired Bill Leverette during my early career in the department and also hearing legendary stories of his classes and reputation. Perhaps even more compelling to me, though, is the honor of following my colleague David Spear in holding this endowed chair. From David’s welcome of me to Greenville through to the present, he has been a ceaseless advocate and encourager.

Thinking about my long-term goals for the chair, my mind quickly turned to the first student who was brave enough to work with me in a summer Undergraduate Research project. Holly Daniel Eldred ’99 revealed the potential for collaborative research with students. My own scholarly agenda has been transformed by both my classroom teaching and the opportunities to mentor students in more intensive summer research, from Holly all the way up through this past summer with Lauren Graves ’22. I’m excited for the opportunities that the Leverette Chair will provide in fostering more of these collaborative mentoring experiences.
Reflections on a year of Virtual/Flex Teaching

Like everything else in 2020, the coronavirus pandemic forced radical changes to the practice of teaching, disrupting expectations and traditions while also opening up new possibilities and opportunities. Change came quickly in March, as faculty were given two weeks to adapt to online classes. The summer brought a welcome respite for creating more intentional approaches to online teaching, while many of us worked together to discuss the most efficient way to reinvent our pedagogies. When school started again in the fall several professors embraced the use of a hybrid model, with in-person classes limited in size (in order to social distance) and the remaining students attending online. Others continued teaching exclusively online, adapting in-person practices to fit the new virtual environment. Everyone on campus dealt with the complications of the pandemic, which included all meetings with students being virtual, frequent student absences or isolations (due to Covid-19 exposure) and/or issues raised by student travel due to the delayed arrival of sophomores and juniors.

Needless to say, the transition to virtual and flex teaching brought with it a number of frustrations. By now, we’ve all experienced the annoying reality of Zoom calls, including bad connections, people talking over each other, and the intrusions of home elements upon the workspace (try lecturing about the French Revolution as your toddler makes faces at you from across the room). Students reported feeling more distracted than usual, tempted by social media, games, or other environmental factors. Faculty teaching in person had to lecture wearing masks, were not allowed to move around the room, or to write on the board (since the virtual students couldn’t see the writing).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the transition was that we all got to see inside each others’ homes and living spaces. As professors, we saw a cultural/personal side of students often absent from the classroom through the posters and decorations that adorned their walls. Experiences. Some professors were able to bring academic experts virtually into their classrooms, enhancing pedagogical opportunities while spicing things up a bit. Dr. Nair, for example, surprised her students by inviting the author of their reading for the day (Dr. Tejaswini Ganti) into their discussion (a practice Dr. Nair now refers to as “scholarly Zoom Bombing”). Others enjoyed newfound geographical conveniences created by the virtual environment. Professors who live far from campus were now able to meet at virtually any time with students, while several students made presentations and participated in group discussions from abroad. The History Department’s virtual alumni homecoming witnessed record attendance, with alumni joining us from across the country. Finally, as the pandemic subsides, it may even be possible to teach from important historical sites such as Gettysburg or Auschwitz, giving students a far more experiential immersion than ever before. Certainly it will be possible to do more CLPs and bring more guest experts to campus now that we no longer have to pay for transportation and lodging costs. Of course no one knows when things will return to “normal,” but when they do, hopefully we can keep some of these positive changes to further enhance Furman’s educational experience.

And in the meantime, please feel free to set up a virtual coffee with one of your old professors. It’s never been easier to reconnect with the department.

— Jason Hansen
Public Conceptions of the Rules of War during the American Revolution

Kevin Buccini (Spanish ’22), Summer Research Fellowship with Dr. John Barrington

This past summer I assisted Dr. Barrington with his research on Public Conceptions of the Rules of War during the American Revolution. The rules of war were the commonly accepted, yet informal, codes of conduct meant to regulate various aspects of warfare, such as how prisoners, civilians, and the wounded were to be treated. Since *ius in bello*, or the rules of war, was not yet enforced by any international body, it was up to the armies themselves, and the general public, to monitor military conduct and ensure combatants were acting within these accepted standards. Dr. Barrington and I investigated the extent to which civilians had an understanding of the rules of war by combing through newspaper reports of controversial events during the American Revolution for public commentary. Due to the remarkable freedom of the press that existed in both the colonies and England during the Revolution, there was a wealth of information for review. One practice I found particularly interesting was the use of ships by the British to detain prisoners. These prison ships became infamous for their inhumane conditions, and it is estimated that thousands died aboard them during the course of the war. Dr. Barrington worked on exploring how this subject was treated in British papers, while I analyzed publications in the colonies to understand how the two sides presented, or ignored, this controversial practice.

Crazy, Yet Royal: Revealing the Royal Commitment held by King George III

Katie Wooten ’20, Summer Research Fellowship with Dr. Carolyn Day — funded by the Waco F. Childers Jr. Research Fellowship in History

This summer, I was lucky enough to continue my research about the British monarch, King George III, and his mental illness. Well-known in the musical Hamilton, King George III battled bouts of madness periodically throughout his long reign. The madness of King George centered around a mental illness. Some historians suspect it was bipolar disorder. His symptoms included incessant talking and confusion. My project, entitled “Crazy yet Royal: Revealing the Royal Commitment held by King George III,” focused on the King’s spell of madness in 1804 and the treatments that followed to restore his health and stability to the Crown. I transcribed hundreds of letters from the King’s physicians, concerned citizens and the King himself. The letters’ content confirm that while King George’s health was faltering, he did everything in his power to appear and conduct himself like an able-minded monarch. As I transcribed his physicians’ notes, I could not help but feel sympathy for the King. Whether tied up in a straitjacket for hours at a time or tied up in a chair in front of a raging fire, his treatments to restore sanity were certainly harsh. COVID-19 cancelled my trip to the Scottish archives for the summer, but my days were still filled with fascinating discoveries from my own laptop about the King’s long journey to recovery.
Faculty-Student Research

Around about Amoy: Life and Death in a Treaty Port Town, 1840-1854

Trenton Newman ’21, Summer Research Fellowship with Dr. Lane Harris

I learned a great deal from my summer research experience about the Small Swords Rebellion in Amoy in 1853 and about myself as a person. In the course of my research, I became fascinated with the slogan “Oppose the Qing, Restore the Ming” and how that phrase became associated with a number of anti-Qing rebellions, but had little to do with the origins or purposes of the rebellions themselves. I also learned a lot about what happened inside Amoy during the rebellion, largely through first-hand British accounts, and about the retaking of the city and the bloodbath that followed. The research itself was all very interesting, but I learned a lot more about myself in the process. It would have been easy for a virtual project to get out of hand, or for me to procrastinate during the pandemic, but I actually became more productive than I have at any previous point in my life by learning better time management skills and how to approach a large-scale work project. As a result, I grew as a person and credit this to my work on the research with Dr. Harris.

Alumni Memories of Lloyd Benson Continued

Unrelated memory: Dr Benson had us students to his home to watch the then-new Ken Burns Civil War documentary and we met his dogs, all named after US Presidents. Best wishes to him.

Russ Merritt ’93

I entered Furman in the autumn of 2001 with every intention of majoring in Mathematics. After two weeks in Dr. Benson’s Western Civilization course, I declared a History major. As a high school teacher, I can say without a doubt that Lloyd Benson is the greatest teacher I ever had. I think I ended up taking 4 of his classes while at Furman. Not only did Dr. B. become my advisor, but he also became a trusted friend. I fondly recall going to see Gods and Generals in the theater with him; and calling him anytime I needed advice about life. Words will not suffice here: Dr. Lloyd Benson is a treasure, and Furman is lucky to have been gifted with so many years of his service. He is a lion of the profession, and his mark will always be felt on those who were fortunate enough to have taken his classes. I thank him, and I wish him well.

Russell (Rusty) Lee ’05

Dr. Benson’s enthusiasm and love for 19th century US history is contagious. This is my preferred time period to study as well so his classes were my favorite. I could listen all day to his stories about the challenges and improvements that took place in America during those years. These were some of the most trying times in American history, and I appreciated Dr. Benson’s nuanced discussions and how he encouraged us to think outside of the box. I did my senior seminar with him in 1998, and he encouraged me to pursue my love of learning about women’s roles in the Civil War through reading diaries from both Northern and Southern women. I found this paper recently in my attic and was amazed at how much I still love this topic. Who knew that 22 years later, I would be using some of the same research to write my first historical fiction novel about women living in Richmond, VA during the Civil War? I credit Dr. Benson with helping me hone my love of Civil War-era women’s stories that will hopefully lead to my new career in writing novels.

Jayda Justus ’98
Over the course of the summer, the killing of several unarmed African Americans brought renewed attention to race and inequality in American society. These events provoked strong responses among our students and faculty. Furman has wrestled with difficult questions about the role of race in its own past, as exemplified by the report issued by the Task Force on Slavery and Justice (which included Drs. O’Neill, Benson, and Tollison). Dr. Tollison has also been involved in municipal discussion about the future of Greenville’s Confederate veterans monument, while at an individual level many members of the department have participated in a number of discussions about addressing current issues of racial inequality on campus.

Collectively, however, we felt compelled by the summer’s events to organize a series of panels and speakers that would examine the history of race and ethnicity in American society. All too often discussions about these issues are burdened by the politics of the moment, too often leading to polemics rather than dialogue (it is after all quite easy to judge others, but much harder to try to understand their differing experiences and perspectives – one of the primary goals of a liberal arts education). It is our hope, therefore, that our efforts can help contextualize some of the issues we as Americans are now wrestling with, and that by lending our academic expertise we can open eyes to new directions and possibilities for the future.

Our series includes a broad variety of speakers and topics. It began in early October with a panel on Confederate memory that included Drs. Hansen and Tollison, who highlighted the changing nature of the memory of this controversial past in the “new south.” Furman student Asha Marie Larson-Baldwin (’23) also spoke of her own experiences trying to change the name of Wade Hampton High School, named after a former Confederate general and segregationist. On October 27, Dr. Robert Greene II spoke on “The Odd Couple of American Politics,” explaining why African American voters moved in large numbers to the Democratic Party between 1960 and 1980. The third panel “Your Place in History” featured prize-winning genealogist Walter B. Curry, Jr., who spoke about his efforts to uncover his family’s fascinating past.

Our next panel in April will examine comparative caste systems around the world, featuring our own Dr. Harris (on China) and Dr. Nair (on India) and Dr. Edward Telles (on Latin America). Finally, the showcase event will be a screening of the musical Hamilton, followed by a discussion with actor Bryan Terrell Clark, who played George Washington in the Broadway production. Clark will speak about his own experiences as an African American in the theatre business, as well as the challenges and possibilities raised by the show’s intriguing use of race to tell a more inclusive narrative of our country’s founding.

So far the virtual events – all CLPs – have been enormously successful, with 200-300 attendees per session.

— Jason Hansen
This past August, the nation celebrated the one-hundred year anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Though COVID obstructed many of the plans that had long been in place, Furman and Greenville creatively participated in several safe programs to honor this momentous occasion.

Since 2018, Dr. Courtney Tollison and students Sam Hayes ’19 and Marlies Bronner ’20, have been engaged in research on the women’s suffrage movement in South Carolina. Their research has culminated in several significant public history endeavors, all of which were presented as part of a panel, titled “Suffrage at 100: Opportunities and Challenges for 19th Amendment Commemorations,” at the National Council on Public History’s annual conference in 2020. Their research will also be published in “Our Country First: The Making of a Southern City during the Progressive Era and World War I,” in late 2021.

In 2019, Tollison pitched an idea to SC Educational TV about a documentary project in accordance with the centennial. The three-part documentary series Sisterhood: SC Suffragists aired in December 2020 and January 2021.

Between August and December, Duke Library hosted two exhibits, a poster exhibit from the National Portrait Gallery and “The Simple Ground of Justice: Greenvillians in the Fight for Women’s Suffrage,” which was on display in Furman’s Special Collections and University Archives.

On the night of August 26, the actual anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, the Furman Belltower and Duke Library, in addition to M. Judson Booksellers, the Upcountry History Museum-Furman University, and the Greenville Drive stadium, were uplit in the colors of the women’s suffrage movement — purple, gold, and white. Students from Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies offered a public reading of excerpts from the 19th Amendment and quotes from national, local, and Furman and Greenville Women’s College suffrage leaders. These efforts were part of a national program called “Forward Into Light” that was sponsored by the national Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission.

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**Alumni Updates**

R. C. Webber ’82 won a 2020 International Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Book Award (IABA) in the Non-Fiction Religion/Philosophy category for A Balm in Gilead: Eulogies of Comfort, an anthology of African American funeral sermons that he compiled.

Alexia Jones Helsley ’67 is Senior Professor of History and University Archivist at University of South Carolina Aiken. Recently, she published Lost Aiken County and contributed requested chapters to Recovering the Piedmont Past, II and Our Prince of Scribes: Writers Remember Pat Conroy. In March, the South Carolina Historical Society awarded her article “The Catawba Nation in the American Revolution,” the Daniel Hollis prize for best academic paper 2019-2020. Helsley also chairs the SC Old Exchange Commission and serves as secretary of the SC Historical Association.

John D. Wilsey ’92 has written a biography of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles which will be published in February 2021. The title of the book is God’s Cold Warrior: The Life and Faith of John Foster Dulles, and it will be included in Eerdmans’ Library of Religious Biography series. The book is based on research he conducted as the 2017-18 William E. Simon Visiting Fellow in Religion and Public Life at the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University.

Paul Johnstone ’05 is Associate Professor of Leadership Studies at the Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, AL where he teaches leadership, strategy, and ethics. His first book, The Army of Ptolemaic Egypt, was recently published by Barnsley/ Pen & Sword.
**Marian Strobel** recommends *Louisa: The Extraordinary Life of Mrs. Adams* by Louisa Thomas (New York: Penguin Press, 2016). Like Melania Trump, Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams was born and raised in Europe, although to an American father and an English mother. This extensive biography details her fascinating life and marriage to the often cold and socially inept John Quincy Adams. Based in large part on Louisa’s own memoirs, it focuses on her interior life, while also documenting her remarkable experiences as the wife of a diplomat during the Napoleonic era, who went on to become a statesman and president of the United States. Although often minimizing her own contributions to her husband’s career, Louisa was critical in advancing it due to her charm and skills as a hostess. What is impressive is that the biography manages to concentrate on Louisa and her marriage, without John Quincy becoming the center of attention.

**Erik Ching** recommends Carolyn Forche’s *What You Have Heard Is True: A Memoir of Witness and Resistance* (NY: Penguin, 2020). I first read Forche’s poem, “The Coronel,” when I was in college in the mid 1980s and it has had a lasting impact on me. Now we have in Forche’s own words the story of her experiences in El Salvador in the late 1970s, as that country teetered on the brink of its 12-year civil war (1980-1992), that led her to write “The Coronel.” While Forche’s memoir is about El Salvador, it is more a metaphor for outsiders who looked at El Salvador’s civil war, tried to understand it, and as a consequence were duly impacted by it. Sadly, it’s a sensation I’m having currently about my own country.

**Jason Hansen** recommends two books: *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* by Hannah Arendt (NY: Penguin Books, 1963, 2006); and *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* by Francis Fukuyama (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018). Why do good people do (really) bad things? The question is as old as time itself, transcending eras and geographies. In 1963, the philosopher Hannah Arendt used the occasion of the capture and trial of SS officer Adolf Eichmann (the chief logistical planner of the Holocaust) as an opportunity to explore this central question about human nature. Instead of following the dominant interpretation of the Nazis as motivated by hatred, Arendt argued that the path towards evil was lined with good intentions: the desire for career advancement and social recognition. The book (and Arendt’s interpretation) is not above criticism, but it may provide a useful framework for understanding contemporary events in a global era of change. A similar and more recent publication dealing with these issues is Francis Fukuyama’s *Identity*. Fukuyama is best known for his prediction in 1989 (“An End to History?”) that the fall of Communism would lead to consensus about the virtues of democracy, liberalism and capitalism. *Identity* is his explanation of where things went wrong. It argues that many contemporary economic, social, and political grievances are actually rooted in cultural questions, especially the demand for individuals to receive social recognition in mass society. While not as focused on the question of “evil” as Arendt, it nevertheless seeks to understand why so many global movements seek to move away from the liberal democratic spirit that seemed triumphant at the close of the 20th century.
Thank You to Our Donors

We in the History Department extend our deep gratitude to our supporters. The Alumni Fund allows us to support student-oriented initiatives and afford departmental needs, and the Block Fund helps offset the costs of faculty research. Donations can now be made online at alumni.furman.edu/donate. In the designation box select “other,” and in the description box be sure to specify “History Alumni Fund” or “John Block Research Fund” to prevent the money from going into the general budget.

The Alumni Fund

In the late 1990s, department chairperson Dr. David Spear, with the generous support of our alumni and students, established the Alumni Fund. Ever since, the Alumni Fund has been crucial to the development of innovative courses, aided in faculty research and publication, and assisted the department in countless, important ways as we strive to provide the best possible liberal arts education to our students. Although space prohibits us from recounting all the ways the Alumni Fund has aided in our work over the past year, we thought a representative example would show how your kindly donations have been put to good use.

In November 2019, the Alumni Fund supported Dr. Carolyn Day’s attendance at a symposium run by the Georgian Papers Programme held in London. The symposium, entitled The Georgian World Meets the Digital Era, brought together faculty from around the world who are working on digital projects in the Georgian papers collection. In addition to learning more about this burgeoning new field, Dr. Day also presented some work from her manuscript Uncovering the Invalid: The Social, Medical, and Personal Responses to the Illness of Princess Amelia (1783-1810).

The John Block Fund

In 2014, retired Furman University President Dr. David Shi established a fund in honor of Dr. John Block to support faculty travel and scholarship. We would like to thank Dr. Shi for his ongoing support and for many alumni who have donated in honor of Dr. Block since the inauguration of the fund. During academic year 2019-2020, the Block Fund helped support Dr. Steve O’Neill’s purchase of several works on the methods of oral history as he and a group of students commenced a long-term project on southern history. Although faculty travel is prohibited during the pandemic, the Block Fund was also used in fall 2020 to support Dr. Nadia Kanagawa’s research into the history of immigrants from the Korean peninsula into the Japanese archipelago during the seventh and eighth centuries.

Elizabeth Green Ausband ’88 and Andy Ausband
Charles Auslander ’65 and Bette Biediger Auslander
Elizabeth McKay Barrington ’81 and Steve Barrington
Elizabeth Koppang Barton ’13 and Chandler Barton ’13
Rick Bell ’82 and Patricia Bell
Katie Clerkin Benston ’92 and Tommy Benston ’92
Sarah Thomas Clemmons ’99 and Charles Clemmons
Rob Coggins ’84
Lynn Hatcher DeLeo-Totaro ’75
Robert Draper and Tracey Chandler Draper
Robert Dreslin ’99
Jon Dumitru ’03 and Kathleen Page Dumitru
Amy Hunter Emmanuel and Jim Emmanuel
Andy Foy ’00 and Kay Hill Foy
Paul Hoover ’99
Ed Jones ’54
Jayda Biddix Justus ’98 and Brent Justus
Rebecca Pullin Kay ’86 and Ansel Kay
Wendell Kimbrough ’06 and Hahna Kimbrough
Rob Mactavish ’88
James N. Martin ’79
Mary Miller ’87
Hannah Mooney ’15
Morgan Morris ’12
Michael Orr ’05
Chris Osborne ’06
Steve Patton ’77 and Debbie Patton
Carrie-Lynn Codega Pomian ’95 and Thomas Pomian
Kara Stewart ’95
Kerry Stubbs ’94 and Tyson Boheler
Erin Enseleit Surrrett ’09 and Myles Surrrett ’09
Caroline Thomas ’14
Katherine Wells ’73 and Jim Flanagan
Hugh Williamson ’08
Chip Wilson ’84 and Dana Kennedy Wilson
Three of our faculty received distinguished honors over the past year. In the spring, the administration awarded John Barrington with the Alester G. and Janie Earle Furman Meritorious Teaching Award, the highest honor a faculty member can receive. Barrington continued his excellent teaching by mentoring Kevin Buccini during a summer research project on “Public Conceptions of the Rules of War during the American Revolution.” Tim Fehler was appointed to the William E. Leverette, Jr., endowed chair in history, the chair formerly held by David Spear. He also completed a virtual summer research project with Lauren Graves on news reporting during the English civil wars of the 1640s and published “Victimas como Demandantes: Consistorios” in Fe y castigo: Inquisiciones y consistorios calvinistas en el mundo moderno. To her great surprise – although you all know Marian Strobel as a great swimmer – she was named Furman’s recipient of the All Southern Conference Faculty Award in recognition of her significant impact on students, particularly student-athletes, and to her many years of dedicated service to the institution.

Savita Nair returned from India in mid-March with fourteen Furman students when their travel-study program was cut short due to the pandemic. After studying history and other subjects in the southern cities of Chennai and Kochi, the group ended their journey in cosmopolitan Pune. In Pune, students lived in homestays and had customized internships aligned with their career pathways. Jason Hansen had several study away trips cancelled because of the pandemic, but kept busy by teaching a new Medieval Europe course and organizing a yearlong series of CLPs on the theme of Race and Ethnicity in American history. Steve O’Neill delivered remarks at Furman’s first Joseph Vaughn Day on January 29, 2020, which commemorated Furman’s desegregation on that date in 1965. A statue of Vaughn is currently being constructed in front of the Duke Library. As our distinguished university public historian, Courtney Tollison remained remarkably busy with numerous public presentations, curated exhibits, and research projects related to the centennial of suffrage in the Upstate. Tollison also helped several institutions adjust their work in response to the pandemic by serving as a reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities Cares Grants program and the South Carolina Historical Society’s Covid-19 Task Force.

Erik Ching also engaged in important public scholarship by restarting his biweekly column, with his co-editor Hector Lindo, in El Faro Academico, an online investigative newspaper in El Salvador. Their column shares new research and primary documents, but has been targeted by pro-government trolls who describe the investigative research published in the newspaper as “fake news.” Carolyn Day gave a slew of talks, interviews, and presentations on her area of expertise, the history of medicine in England. She was the keynote speaker at a meeting of the Cambridge Body and Food Histories Group, interviewed for the Voxpopulorum, History Hack, and Popular Science’s The Weirdest Thing I Learned this Week podcasts, delivered a master class at Yale’s Lewis Walpole Library, and presented a paper entitled “Remember Ann Beach: Inheritance, Incarceration & the Genealogy of an Illness Narrative” at the British Society for Eighteenth Century Studies conference at Oxford.

Nadia Kanagawa published a chapter entitled “East Asia’s First World War, 643-668” in East Asia in the World: Twelve Events That Shaped the Modern International Order. Although her other conference presentations were canceled because of the pandemic, Kanagawa will be virtually presenting “Who Created Koma District? Challenges in Defining Ancient Japanese Populations with Texts and Artifacts” at the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies this March.

As you can see, the pandemic has slowed us down, but not much. What have you been doing during these unusual times? We’d love to hear what’s been keeping you occupied during the pandemic. Please drop us a line sometime this year, we always appreciate hearing from our alums. Stay safe out there!

—Lane Harris